

1608/461.
BRITANNIA.

A

POEM.

Written in the YEAR, 1719.

——— *Et tantas audetis tollere Moles?
Quos Ego — sed motos præstat componere fluctus.
Post mihi non simili Pæna commissa luetis.
Maturate fugam, Regique hæc dicite vestro:
Non illi Imperium Pelagi, Sævumque Tridentem,
Sed mihi sorte datum.———* VIRG.

The THIRD EDITION.

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M DCC XXX.

BRITANNIA

POEM

Written in the Year 1767

By
MRS. MARY WATSON
Author of
"The History of the
British Empire"
VIZ.



Printed by
J. DODD, in Pall Mall

MDCCLXX



B R I T A N N I A.

A

P O E M.



S on the sea-beat shore *Britannia* sat,
Of her degenerate sons the faded fame,
Deep in her anxious heart, revolving
sad :

Bare was her throbbing bosom to the gale,
That hoarse, and hollow, from the bleak surge blew ;
Loose flow'd her tresses ; rent her azure robe. 6

A 2

Hung

4 *B R I T A N N I A.*

Hung o'er the deep from her majestick brow
She tore the laurel, and she tore the bay.

Nor ceas'd the copious grief to bathe her cheek;
Nor ceas'd her sobs to murmur to the Main. 10

Peace discontented nigh, departing, stretch'd
Her dove-like wings. And War, tho' greatly rous'd,
Yet mourn'd his fetter'd hands. While thus the Queen
Of nations spoke; and what she said the Muse
Recorded, faithful, in unbidden verse. 15

Even not yon sail, that, from the sky-mixt wave,
Dawns on the sight, and wafts the *Royal Youth*,
A freight of future glory to my shore;
Even not the flattering view of golden days,
And rising periods yet of bright renown, 20
Beneath the *Parents*, and their endless line
Thro' late revolving time, can sooth my rage;
While, unchastis'd, the insulting *Spaniard* dares
Infest the trading flood, full of vain War
Despise my Navies, and my Merchants seize; 25

As



As, trusting to false peace, they fearless roam
 The world of waters wild, made, by the toil,
 And liberal blood of glorious ages, mine:
 Nor bursts my sleeping thunder on their head.
 Whence this unwonted patience? this weak doubt?
 This tame beseeching of rejected peace? 31
 This meek forbearance? this unnative fear,
 To generous *Britons* never known before?
 And fail'd my Fleets for this; on *Indian* tides
 To float, unactive, with the veering winds? 35
 The mockery of war! while hot disease,
 And sloth distemper'd, swept off burning crowds,
 For action ardent; and amid the deep,
 Inglorious, sunk them in a watry grave.
 There now they lie beneath the rowling flood, 40
 Far from their friends, and country unaveng'd;
 And back the weeping war-ship comes again,
 Dispirited, and thin; her sons asham'd
 Thus idly to review their native shore;
 With not one glory sparkling in their eye, 45

One triumph on their tongue. A passenger,
 The violated Merchant comes along;
 That far-fought wealth, for which the noxious gale
 He drew, and sweat beneath Equator suns,
 By lawless force detain'd; a force that soon 50
 Would melt away, and every spoil resign,
 Were once the *British* lion heard to roar.
 Whence is it that the proud *Iberian* thus,
 In their own well-asserted element,
 Dares rouse to wrath the Masters of the Main? 55
 Who told him, that the big incumbent war
 Would not, ere this, have roll'd his trembling ports
 In smoaky ruin? and his guilty stores,
 Won by the ravage of a butcher'd world,
 Yet unatton'd, sunk in the swallowing deep, 60
 Or led the glittering prize into the *Thames*?

There was a time (Oh let my languid sons
 Resume their spirit at the rousing thought!)
 When all the pride of *Spain*, in one dread fleet,
 Swell'd

Swell'd o'er the lab'ring furge; like a whole heaven
 Of clouds, wide-roll'd before the boundless breeze.
 Gaily the splendid Armament along 67
 Exultant plough'd, reflecting a red gleam,
 As sunk the sun, o'er all the flaming vast;
 Tall, gorgeous, and elate; drunk with the dream
 Of easy conquest; while their bloated war, 71
 Stretch'd out from sky to sky, the gather'd force
 Of ages held in its capacious womb.
 But soon, regardless of the cumbrous pomp,
 My dauntless *Britons* came, a gloomy few, 75
 With tempest black, the goodly scene deform'd,
 And laid their glory waste. The bolts of fate
 Resistless thunder'd thro' their yielding sides;
 Fierce o'er their beauty blaz'd the lurid flame;
 And seiz'd in horrid grasp, or shatter'd wide, 80
 Amid the mighty waters, deep they sunk.
 Then too from every promontory chill,
 Rank fen, and cavern where the wild wave works,
 I swept confederate winds, and swell'd a storm.

Round the glad isle, snatch'd by the vengeful blast,
 The scatter'd remnants drove; on the blind shelve,
 And pointed rock, that marks the indented shore,
 Relentless dash'd, where loud the Northern Main
 Howls thro' the fractur'd *Caledonian* isles.

Such were the dawns of my liquid reign; 90
 But since how vast it grew, how absolute,
 Even in those troubled times, when dreadful *Blake*
 Aw'd angry nations with the *British* Name,
 Let every humbled state, let *Europe* say,
 Sustain'd, and ballanc'd, by my naval arm. 95
 Ah what must these immortal spirits think
 Of your poor shifts? These, for their country's good,
 Who fac'd the blackest danger, knew no fear,
 No mean submission, but commanded peace.
 Ah how with indignation must they burn? 100
 (If ought, but joy, can touch ethereal breasts)
 With shame? with grief? to see their feeble sons
 Shrink from that empire o'er the conquer'd seas,
 For

For which their wisdom plan'd, their councils glow'd,
And their veins bled thro' many a toiling age. 105

Oh first of human blessings! and supreme!
Fair *Peace*! how lovely, how delightful thou!
By whose wide tie, the kindred sons of men,
Like brothers live, in amity combin'd,
And unsuspicious faith; while honest toil 110
Gives every joy, and to those joys a right,
Which idle, barbarous Rapine but usurps.
Pure is thy reign; when, unaccurs'd by blood,
Nought, save the sweetness of indulgent showers,
Trickling distils into the vernal glebe; 115
Instead of mangled carcasses, sad-seen,
When the blythe sheaves lie scatter'd o'er the field;
When only shining shares, the crooked knife,
And hooks imprint the vegetable wound;
When the land blushes with the rose alone, 120
The falling fruitage, and the bleeding vine.
Oh, *Peace*! thou source, and soul of social life;

Be-

Beneath whose calm, inspiring influence,
 Science his views enlarges, Art refines,
 And swelling Commerce opens all her ports; 125
 Blest be the Man divine, who gives us Thee!
 Who bids the trumpet hush his horrid clang,
 Nor blow the giddy nations into rage;
 Who sheaths the murderous blade; the deadly gun
 Into the well-pil'd armoury returns; 130
 And, every vigour from the work of death,
 To grateful industry converting, makes
 The country flourish, and the city smile.
 Unviolated, him the virgin sings;
 And him the smiling mother to her train. 135
 Of him the shepherd, in the peaceful dale,
 Chaunts; and, the treasures of his labour sure,
 The husbandman of him, as at the plough,
 Or team, he toils. With him the sailor sooths,
 Beneath the trembling moon, the midnight wave;
 And the full city, warm, from street to street, 141
 And shop to shop, responsive, rings of him.

B R I T A N N I A. 11

Nor joys one land alone; his praise extends
Far as the sun rolls the diffusive day;
125 Far as the breeze can bear the gifts of peace, 145
Till all the happy nations catch the song.

What would not *Peace*! the Patriot bear for thee?
What painful patience? What incessant care?
130 What mixt anxiety? What sleepless toil?
Even from the rash protected what reproach? 150
For he thy value knows; thy friendship he
To human nature: but the better thou,
The richer of delight, sometimes the more
135 Inevitable *War*; when ruffian force
Awakes the fury of an injur'd state. 155
Then the good easy man, whom reason rules;
Who, while unhurt, knew nor offence, nor harm,
Rouz'd by bold insult, and injurious rage,
e; With sharp, and sudden check, th' astonish'd sons
141 Of violence confounds; firm as his cause, 160
His bolder heart; in awful justice clad;
Nor His

His eyes effulging a peculiar fire :

And, as he charges thro' the prostrate war,
His keen arm teaches faithless men, no more
To dare the sacred vengeance of the just, 165

And what, my thoughtless sons, should fire you more,
Than when your well-earn'd empire of the deep
The least beginning injury receives? 168

What better cause can call your lightning forth?
Your thunder wake? Your dearest life demand?
What better cause, than when your country sees
The fly destruction at her vitals aim'd? 172

For oh it much imports you, 'tis your all,
To keep your Trade intire, intire the force,
And honour of your Fleets; o'er that to watch,
Even with a hand severe, and jealous eye. 176

In intercourse be gentle, generous, just,
By wisdom polish'd, and of manners fair;
But on the sea be terrible, untam'd,
Unconquerable still: let none escape, 180

Who

B R I T A N N I A. 13

Who shall but aim to touch your glory there.
Is there the man, into the lyon's den
Who dares intrude, to snatch his young away?
And is a *Briton* seiz'd? and seiz'd beneath
The flumbring terrors of a *British* Fleet? 185
Then ardent rise! Oh great in vengeance rise!
O'erturn the proud, teach rapine to restore:
And as you ride sublimely round the world,
Make every vessel stoop, make every state
At once their welfare and their duty know. 190
This is your glory; this your wisdom; this
The native power for which you were design'd
By fate, when fate design'd the firmest state,
That e'er was seated on the subject sea;
A state, alone, where *Liberty* should live, 195
In these late times, this evening of mankind,
When *Athens*, *Rome*, and *Carthage* are no more,
The world almost in slavish sloth dissolv'd.
For this, these rocks around your coast were thrown;
For this, your oaks, peculiar harden'd, shoot 200
Strong

Strong into sturdy growth; for this, your hearts

Swell with a fullen courage, growing still

As danger grows; and strength, and toil for this

Are liberal pour'd o'er all the fervent land.

Then cherish this, this unexpensive power, 205

Undangerous to the publick, ever prompt,

By lavish Nature thrust into your hand:

And, unencumber'd with the bulk immense

Of conquest, whence huge empires rose, and fell,

Self-crush'd, extend your reign from shore to shore,

Where'er the wind your high behests can blow,

And fix it deep on this eternal base. 212

For should the sliding fabrick once give way,

Soon slacken'd quite, and past recovery broke,

It gathers ruin as it rolls along, 215

Steep-rushing down to that devouring gulph,

Where many a mighty empire buried lies.

And should the big redundant flood of Trade,

In which ten thousand thousand Labours join

Their several currents, till the boundless tide 220

Rolls

Rolls in a radiant deluge o'er the land,
Should this bright stream, the least inflected, point
Its course another way, o'er other lands
The various treasure would resistless pour,
Ne'er to be won again; its antient tract 225
Left a vile channel, desolate, and dead,
With all around a miserable waste.

Not *Egypt*, were, her better heaven, the *Nile*
Turn'd in the pride of flow; when o'er his rocks,
And roaring cataracts, beyond the reach 230
Of dizzy vision pil'd, in one wide flash
An *Ethiopian* deluge foams amain;
(Whence wond'ring fable trac'd him from the sky)
Even not that prime of earth, where harvests crowd
On untill'd harvests, all the teeming year, 235
If of the fat o'erflowing culture robb'd,
Were then a more uncomfortable wild,
Steril, and void; than of her trade depriv'd,
Britons, your boasted isle: her Princes funk;

Her

Her high-built honour moulder'd to the dust ; 240
 Unnerv'd her force ; her spirit vanish'd quite ;
 With rapid wing her riches fled away ;
 Her unfrequented ports alone the sign
 Of what she was ; her Merchants scatter'd wide ;
 Her hollow shops shut up ; and in her streets, 245
 Her fields, woods, markets, villages, and roads,
 The cheerful voice of labour heard no more.

Oh let not then waste Luxury impair
 That manly soul of toil, which strings your nerves
 And your own proper happiness creates ! 250
 Oh let not the soft, penetrating plague
 Creep on the free-born mind ! and working there,
 With the sharp tooth of many a new-form'd want,
 Endless, and idle all, eat out the heart
 Of *Liberty* ; the high conception blast ; 255
 The noble sentiment, th' impatient scorn
 Of base subjection, and the swelling wish

For

For general good, erasing from the mind:
 While nought save narrow Selfishness succeeds,
 And low design, the sneaking passions all 260
 Let loose, and reigning in the rankled breast.
 Induc'd at last, by scarce-perceiv'd degrees,
 Sapping the very frame of government,
 And life, a total dissolution comes;
 Sloth, ignorance, dejection, flattery, fear, 265
 Oppression raging o'er the waste he makes;
 The human being almost quite extinct;
 And the whole state in broad Corruption sinks.
 Oh shun that gulph: that gaping ruin shun!
 And countless ages roll it far away 270
 From you, ye heaven-belov'd! may *Liberty*,
 The light of life! the sun of human kind!
 Whence Heroes, Bards, and Patriots borrow flame,
 Even where the keen depressive North descends,
 Still spread, exalt, and actuate your powers! 275
 While slavish Southern climates beam in vain.
 And may a publick spirit from the *Throne*,

B

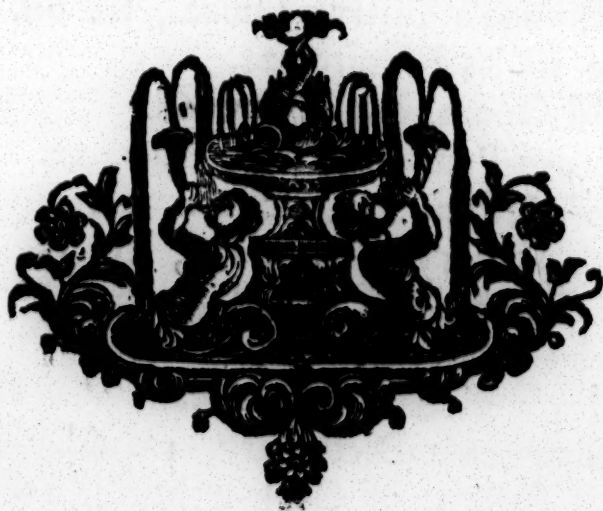
Where

Where every Virtue fits, go copious forth
 Live o'er the land! the finer Arts inspire; 279
 Make thoughtful Science raise his pensive head,
 Blow the fresh Breeze, bid Industry rejoice,
 And the rough Sons of lowliest Labour smile.
 As when, profuse of Spring, the loosen'd West
 Lifts up the pining year, and balmy breathes 284
 Youth, life, and love, and beauty o'er the world.

But haste we from these melancholly shores,
 Nor to deaf winds, and waves, our fruitless plaint
 Pour weak; the country claims our active aid;
 That let us roam; and where we find a spark
 Of publick virtue, blow it into flame. 290
 And now my sons, the sons of freedom! meet
 In awful senate; thither let us fly;
 Burn in the Patriot's thought, flow from his tongue
 In fearless truth; myself, transform'd, preside,
 And shed the spirit of *Britannia* round. 295

This said ; her fleeting form, and airy train,
Sunk in the gale ; and nought but ragged rocks
Rush'd on the broken eye ; and nought was heard
But the rough cadence of the dashing wave. 299

The E N D.



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